DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Building strong, healthy communities together

ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008

NOVA SCOTIA
Community Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Accountability Statement 1

2.0 Message from the Minister 2

3.0 Introduction 3

3.1 Report Structure 3

4.0 Priorities and Accomplishments 4

4.2 HOUSING 5

Enhanced the Access-A-Home Program

The Access-A-Home program helps eligible Nova Scotians make their homes wheelchair accessible. To qualify, individuals must be the occupant of a housing unit and use a wheelchair or have a family member who uses a wheelchair for mobility. Program assistance may include adding a wheelchair ramp, widening doorways and making bathrooms wheelchair accessible.

In 2007-2008, the Access-A-Home program budget was increased to $200,000 from $100,000 and several enhancements were implemented, including:

- changing the eligibility criteria to make the program easier to access, so individuals who will need to use a wheelchair in the near future may also qualify for the program
- increasing the income limits to $39,000 from $30,000 so more people can access the program
- increasing the maximum amount of assistance a household can receive to $5,000 from $3,000 to keep up with the cost of home improvements.

Enhanced the Senior Citizens Assistance Program

The government is committed to helping seniors remain living in their homes and their communities for as long as possible. Through the department's Senior Citizens Assistance Program, low income seniors experiencing difficulties with day-to-day living activities in their homes can apply for financial assistance for home repairs and adaptions.

In 2007-2008, the Department of Health provided an additional $4 million to create a total funding envelope of $6.65 million to help seniors remain in their homes longer. With this funding, Community Services assisted approximately 600 senior households.

4.3 SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES 7
4.4 Services for Persons with Disabilities 12

Social Prosperity Framework

In November 2007, Nova Scotia's new framework for social prosperity - *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Framework* - was announced. This framework outlines how social prosperity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability are linked. It is an important first step to integrate the idea of a broader social prosperity into all aspects of public policy and not silo it within a single department. Government departments working together with communities to develop and implement social policy is the principle behind the framework. It provides the foundation to base the province's future social programming.

New Initiatives Tracking System

A new automated, web-based Initiatives Tracking System was developed to capture, track and store information on the department's most significant initiatives in one central secured location. The new system improves information sharing and enhances reporting capabilities while eliminating reporting duplication. The Initiatives Tracking System will be rolled out to staff in June 2008 and be used to satisfy all the reporting requirements of the department.

5.0 FINANCIAL RESULTS 16

6.0 Performance Measures 18
6.1 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE 18
6.2 Housing 22
6.4 Services for Persons with Disabilities 30

1.0 ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The accountability report of the Department of Community Services for the year ended March 31, 2008, is prepared pursuant to the *Provincial Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against Community Services' business plan information for the fiscal year 2007-2008. The reporting of Community Services' outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by the department's management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of the management of the Department of Community Services and, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department's business plan for the year.

Judy Streatch
Minister, Department of Community Services

Judith F. Ferguson
Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

2.0 MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to present the Department of Community Services' Accountability Report for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The annual Accountability Report provides a summary of the department's accomplishments in fulfilling its Business Plan commitments for the year and the results achieved in meeting its performance targets.

Beyond the department's ongoing commitment to provide a sustainable social service system that promotes the independence, self-reliance, and security of the people we serve, we took on several special initiatives for the year ending March 31, 2008.

A multi-year Poverty Reduction Strategy aimed at reducing poverty, particularly among women and children, and improving the standard of living of Nova Scotians struggling on low incomes was initiated; a comprehensive, inter-departmental youth strategy, *Our Kids are Worth It,* was developed to better coordinate programs and services to children, youth, and families; Community Services was a major contributor to Nova Scotia's new framework for social prosperity - Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Framework, announced in November. This framework outlines how social prosperity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability are linked.

Our 2007-2008 Accountability Report is a valuable tool in Community Services' efforts to provide the best service possible.

Sincerely,

Judy Streatch
Minister, Department of Community Services

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The annual Accountability Report for the Department of Community Services reports on the progress achieved by the department towards the goals, priorities, performance measures and financial targets established in the 2007-2008 Business Plan. The 2007-2008 Business Plan is available on Community Services' website at http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/department/Publications.html.

In establishing its priorities, the department was guided by its mission statement, strategic goals, and outcomes:

MISSION

The Department of Community Services is committed to a sustainable social service system that promotes the independence, self-reliance, and security of the people we serve.

This will be achieved through excellence in service delivery, leadership, and collaboration with our partners.

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities
- Strong, responsive, and sustainable social support system
- Integrated, quality service delivery system
- Strong provider relationships and collaboration
- Leadership and the continuous pursuit of excellence
- Skilled, flexible workforce

3.1 REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is organized into three main sections. The first section outlines the department's progress and accomplishments against the priorities identified in the 2007-2008 Business Plan together with additional accomplishments that were not identified in the plan. The next section provides a summary of the financial results for the fiscal year and the final section provides details regarding performance measures and the results achieved.

4.0 PRIORITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On a day-to-day basis the department delivers a wide range of social programs and services to Nova Scotians in need. These programs and services contribute to better futures for our youth, our families and their children, persons with disabilities, and communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Section 4 describes the progress and accomplishments of the department against the priorities identified in the 2007-2008 Business Plan along with some additional accomplishments.

4.1 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE (ESIA)

The focus of the Employment Support and Income Assistance core business area is to provide financial assistance and other supports to persons in need and to facilitate their movement towards employment, independence, and self-sufficiency.

4.1.1 MULTI-YEAR POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

In 2007-2008, the government - led by the Departments of Community Services and Labour and Workforce Development - set out to develop a multi-year Poverty Reduction Strategy aimed at reducing poverty, particularly among women and children, and improving the standard of living of Nova Scotians struggling on low incomes. To inform this strategy, an inventory of all current government programs and services that support low-income groups was compiled. In the Fall of 2007, the department engaged with a diverse group of stakeholders including representatives from business, the academic community, labour, poverty advocates and other community organizations to hear their views on priorities for addressing poverty.

In December 2007, the approach to the development of the strategy and the scope of the department's work changed with the implementation of *Bill 94 - Poverty Reduction Strategy Working Group*. The Working Group was mandated to make recommendations concerning a strategy for the reduction of poverty in the Province and included representatives from government, labour, police, district health authorities and community economic development agencies; from women's groups, the disability community, the black business community, advocates for the homeless, and those with first hand experience living in poverty. The Group explored programs and supports offered by the Province, best practices in other jurisdictions, and the results of the public consultation.

The public consultation provided the public, including community organizations and anti-poverty advocates, an opportunity to share their ideas on how best to tackle poverty in Nova Scotia. Over 1,300 responses were received from the people of Nova Scotia. The results were

summarized and provided to the Poverty Reduction Working Group to help inform the development of recommendations for government's consideration. The Poverty Reduction Working Group is scheduled to table its recommendations in June 2008 for Government's consideration.

4.1.2 Implemented Annual Adjustments to Basic Personal Allowances

For the fourth consecutive year, the department increased the monthly basic personal allowance rate to help people with the cost of meeting their basic needs. The adjustment, based on the Consumer Price Index of 2.1%, resulted in a $4 monthly increase as of October 1, 2007. Approximately 32,500 eligible beneficiaries received the increase at a total cost of $780,000 in 2007-2008 and $1.6 million in 2008-2009.

Beginning in 2007-2008, as part of government's effort to improve support for all clients receiving Income Assistance, a commitment was made to make annual adjustments to the personal allowance rates based on the Consumer Price Index.

4.2 Housing

Housing is a basic need, fundamental to personal well-being, and the base upon which to build healthy and sustainable communities. A range of housing programs are available to ensure that more households in Nova Scotia have access to safe, appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing. In addition, existing buildings and technical and financial resources are used to support communities.

Government is committed to ensuring Nova Scotia's low-income families have access to a supply of affordable housing options. In the 2007-2008 Business Plan, the department identified a number of priorities for action to increase and preserve Nova Scotia's supply of affordable housing and to help those most in need.

4.2.1 Increased and Preserved the Supply of Affordable Housing

Accelerated the Implementation of Affordable Housing Agreement - Phase II

Phase II Funding, valued at $18.9 million, will generate approximately 200 housing units over the life of the agreement. This work will allow families, seniors and low-income individuals to live in safe, quality housing at an affordable cost. The funds are being invested in new rental housing, rental housing preservation, and home ownership preservation. The department is targeting communities with the longest public housing wait lists and a demonstrated need for affordable housing.

As of March 31, 2008, approximately 50 percent of the Phase II funds were committed; representing approximately 180 units built or preserved. This exceeded the 2007-2008 target to

commit 40 percent of the $18.9 million. This investment brings the total number of affordable housing units built or preserved under the Affordable Housing Agreement Phase I and II to approximately 1,100 units. The remainder of Affordable Housing Agreement funds will be committed by March 2009.

Invested Federal Affordable Housing Trust Funds

As of March 31, 2008, approximately 29 percent of the $23 million Federal Affordable Housing Trust was committed. This exceeded the target set for 2007-2008 to commit 25 percent of the funds. With these funds, the department invested in immediate short term public/social housing pressures such as the installation of elevators in 15 seniors apartment buildings and the construction or regeneration of 40 affordable housing units. The remaining portion of the Federal Affordable Housing Trust, $16.4 million, will be committed in 2008-2009.

Invested Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust Funds

In 2007-2008, the department, consulted with off-reserve representatives to identify investment areas for the Off-Reserve Community. The main areas of focus were new home ownership options, rental preservation, and home repair. Through service delivery agents, identified throughout the Off-Reserve Community, $1.1 million in Affordable Housing options has been delivered. This represents 14 percent of the $7.8 million Trust which is below the 20 percent target set for 2007-2008. During the early stages of construction the focus is on development agreements, design, environmental assessment, and financing arrangements. The bulk of funding is spent in the latter stage on construction which is scheduled for 2008-2009. The remaining funds, $6.7 million, will be delivered in the new fiscal year.

Homelessness Review Project

In 2007-2008, the department established a Homelessness Working Group, consisting of representatives from all levels of government and community-based agencies who provide services to homeless individuals and those at risk of being homeless. The Working Group examined the current homelessness situation in Nova Scotia, and conducted literature and jurisdictional reviews. The scope of the project focused on the "Housing Continuum" under the mandate of the department. It is recognized that the department must take an integrated approach in dealing with the issue of homelessness, which includes linking and interconnecting current and future departmental and/or government initiatives.

Homelessness issues are being dealt with on a case by case basis in partnership with community organizations serving homeless individuals. For example, last winter arrangements were made with Metro Turning Point and Pendleton Place to provide day shelter services to residents during extreme cold weather. The department will continue to work with all our housing partners, including the federal government, to explore ways to address homelessness and its related issues.

4.2.2 Other Accomplishments

The following initiatives are some additional Housing accomplishments that were not identified in the 2007-2008 Business Plan.

Enhanced the Access-A-Home Program

The Access-A-Home program helps eligible Nova Scotians make their homes wheelchair accessible. To qualify, individuals must be the occupant of a housing unit and use a wheelchair or have a family member who uses a wheelchair for mobility. Program assistance may include adding a wheelchair ramp, widening doorways and making bathrooms wheelchair accessible.

In 2007-2008, the Access-A-Home program budget was increased to $200,000 from $100,000 and several enhancements were implemented, including:

- changing the eligibility criteria to make the program easier to access, so individuals who will need to use a wheelchair in the near future may also qualify for the program
- increasing the income limits to $39,000 from $30,000 so more people can access the program
- increasing the maximum amount of assistance a household can receive to $5,000 from $3,000 to keep up with the cost of home improvements.

Enhanced the Senior Citizens Assistance Program

The government is committed to helping seniors remain living in their homes and their communities for as long as possible. Through the department's Senior Citizens Assistance Program, low income seniors experiencing difficulties with day-to-day living activities in their homes can apply for financial assistance for home repairs and adaptions.

In 2007-2008, the Department of Health provided an additional $4 million to create a total funding envelope of $6.65 million to help seniors remain in their homes longer. With this funding, Community Services assisted approximately 600 senior households.

4.3 Services and Supports for Families and Communities

The core business area of Services and Supports for Families and Communities focuses on the provision of safe and nurturing environments for children and youth to enable them to develop to their full potential. The presence of, and opportunity for, positive, supportive experiences in the early years in the home, the care environment, and the neighbourhood can promote optimal outcomes in a child's development including educational, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical domains. In 2007-2008, the department focused on three key areas:

- children and youth at risk
- stable quality child care
- stable placement for children in care.

4.3.1 Response to the Nunn Commission: Youth at Risk

In 2007-2008, a comprehensive youth strategy, *Our Kids are Worth It,* was developed to better coordinate programs and services to children, youth, and families and to fill the gaps in services. The Departments of Community Services, Health, Education, Health Promotion and Protection, and Justice are working together to implement this strategy. The strategy provides a range of services from prevention to intensive intervention. It is a combination of an expansion of existing services that work and an introduction of new services. The strategy also acts on a number of government's key priorities such as educating youth to compete, shortening wait lists, and keeping communities safe. Some highlights include:

- outreach and support for families raising children
- shorter wait times and improved mental health services
- co-ordination of professionals and programs
- youth navigators, a partnership with Kids Help Phone, and a new website for youth information and support
- new programs for at-risk youth
- provincial youth advisory network.

Several initiatives in over 20 sites across Nova Scotia were rolled out in 2007-2008. Some examples of these initiatives are described below.

- Youth Navigators - assists youth, 16-18 years old, and their families to access appropriate, available resources
- Parenting Journey - provides in-home parenting support for families who are challenged with the behaviour and needs of their children over the age of five
- Schools Plus - promotes a model of using schools as important hubs for a range of service delivery to children, youth, and families

In 2008-2009, the Strategy's focus will be on monitoring the 2007-2008 initiatives, increasing the capacity of the five departments to plan and work together, and identifying with community partners needs, gaps and opportunities for additional initiatives that will improve the outcomes for children, youth and families.

4.3.2 Early Learning and Child Care

The 10-year Early Learning and Child Care Plan was announced in 2006. Through this Plan, approximately $200 million will be utilized by the Nova Scotia Government to strengthening the quality and accessibility of child care in Nova Scotia.

The department is investing the money wisely, ensuring a solid plan is in place to create a sustainable system that supports the needs of Nova Scotia's families well into the future. In 2007-2008, the department achieved the following accomplishments:

- Launched the Family Home Day Care program. Through this program, agencies are licensed and funded by the department to manage and monitor family home day care providers to ensure that government standards for quality programs and safety are met. In return, home day care providers have access to materials, equipment and professional support. In 2007-2008, four family home agencies were licensed for approximately 210 spaces. All four agencies are located outside Halifax Regional Municipality, drawing children from rural Nova Scotia. A further 10 agencies are planned for the following year.

- Sixteen applicants were approved for a total of $4.1 million in loans under the Expansion Loan Program to create 500 new licensed child care spaces. Financial assistance was provided to new and existing facilities enabling them to expand their capacity.

- Approved 49 facilities for loans under the Repair and Renovation Program, at a total cost of approximately $1.25 million. Financial assistance was provided to licensed commercial and non-profit child care centres for repairs, renovations, and improvements including the accessibility of facilities for children with identified special needs and energy upgrades.

- Increased the number of subsidized spaces. One hundred new portable spaces were announced in May 2007 and 390 fixed subsidized spaces were converted to portable. A subsidized portable space means funding is provided towards a space in a child care centre with the space belonging to the child and not fixed to the centre. If the child moves to another day care within the province, the child care subsidy moves with them.

4.3.3 Improving Access to Child Welfare Services

The department's vision for child welfare is a single integrated service system, which is accessible and responsive to children and families across the province. To further this vision, the department launched a multi-year child welfare redesign initiative in 2005-2006. Over the course of 2007-2008, the department made considerable progress in the redesign and strengthening of child welfare services, as demonstrated below:

- Realigned the delivery of foster and adoption services through integrated regional service

teams. This included the development and delivery of joint information sessions and the delivery of joint pre-service training programs for all prospective foster and adoptive family applicants.

- Appointed four new regional Child Welfare Specialists, with the responsibility, authority and accountability to place children in residential and parent counselor programs. Having a single point of entry for these programs will lead to more timely placement service to children, and reduce the workload carried by placing social workers.

- Conducted a comprehensive review of research and best practices in preparation to implement standardized assessments for all children in care requiring placement.

- Chaired an interdepartmental program committee to research and recommend standardized treatment and programing for all residential care programs. Work included a literature review, creating an inventory of existing programs, and conducting focus group sessions with the child welfare sector to gather feedback on the proposed programming. Implementation is planned for 2008-2009.

- Provided intensive training to residential service providers, to enhance their skills when working with children and youth who present challenging behaviors.

- Transferred Family and Children's Services of Annapolis County to the Province to further unify child welfare services. This is the fourth child welfare agency to join the Province.

4.3.4 Other Accomplishments

The following initiatives are additional accomplishments in support of families and communities that were not identified in the 2007-2008 Business Plan.

Outdoor Play Space Grant

Community Services announced a one-time Outdoor Play Space Grant, in July 2007, to encourage physical activity and healthy child development. Funding was provided to 270 licensed child care facilities and licensed family home agencies to support the creation and maintenance of natural, safe and stimulating outdoor play spaces. In total, approximately $5.1 million was disbursed.

Program Enhancement Grant

The Program Enhancement Grant provides a one-time grant for use in the development and/or enhancement of the child care program. Grant funding may be used for the purchase of approved items related to children's learning. The Program Enhancement Grant was released in February 2008 and was available to all licensed full-day, part-day centres, Child Development Centres, and Family Home Day Care Agencies. Three hundred and fifty-eight applications were approved at a total cost of approximately $2.6 million.

Child Care Operating Grant

In April 2007, the department released the Child Care Operating Grant. The purpose of this grant is to provide funding support to all licensed child care centres. The funding is intended to help with the salary and benefits of staff in child care centres, providing a foundation for recruitment and retention of staff. A portion of the grant funding can be applied to general operating expenses but grant funds cannot be used for capital expenses. In 2007-2008, 321 child care centres received funding at a total cost of $ 7.3 million.

Online Directory of Licensed Child Care Facilities

The department developed a new online resource to help parents make informed decisions when choosing licensed child care. The website allows parents to search for licensed child care by facility name or location and lists the licensing status of child-care centres across the province. This online directory allows parents to easily check if a day care is compliant with the *Day Care Act* and regulations. The launch of the website is part of government's goal to further enhance the early learning and child-care system for Nova Scotia families.

Licensed Child-Care Identity Program

Community Services launched a new licensed child-care identity program. From now on, all licensed centres will display a sticker with the new licensed child-care symbol. This sticker means the child-care centre has met specific criteria to ensure the health, safety and education of children as outlined in the *Day Care Act* and regulations. With this new program, parents can more easily identify licensed child-care centres and be assured that their centre is regularly inspected. This is part of our government's commitment to ensure that all children enjoy a good start in life and are provided safe, quality care.

Streamlined the Child Abuse Register Search Process

In 2007-2008, the department designed a new streamlined Child Abuse Registry Search process. This new process will make it easier and less time consuming for business, non-profit organizations, foster and adoptive parents, and volunteers to request a child abuse registry search. These changes reduce the cost to clients and government, while maintaining an effective child abuse register screening process.

4.4 Services for Persons with Disabilities

Services for Persons with Disabilities provides services for children, youth and adults with intellectual disabilities, long term mental illness, a physical disability or some combination of the three. The goal is to provide a range of programs that support people at various stages of their development and independence.

4.4.1 Services for Persons with Disabilities Re .ewal Project

The department is committed to improving the range of supports for individuals with disabilities. Over the past several years the department has been engaged in the review of the Services for Persons with Disabilities program. A comprehensive review of both residential and adult day programs for persons with disabilities was completed in 2006-2007. Work included the identification of the current needs of persons with disabilities within each region, their service options, and any service gaps and necessary adjustments that may be required.

Services for Persons with Disabilities Provincial Strategy

In 2007-2008, based upon the departmental reviews of the residential sector and the adult day program sector, Community Services worked on the development of a Services for Persons with Disabilities Provincial Strategy. The strategy's recommendations and their financial implications are in the process of being finalized. The Strategy is designed to renew residential and day program services well into the future.

In the meantime, the department is making strategic investments in existing programs and services, new residential facilities, and new adult day programs to help address gaps in the current range of supports for persons with disabilities.

- An additional $2.2 million was invested to enhance and expand the Alternative Family Support, Direct Family Support, and the Independent Living Support programs for persons with disabilities. This additional investment improved the department's ability to better meet clients needs.

- To enable persons with disabilities to live to their full potential while remaining close to their families and communities, the department invested in:
  - a six-bed community home in Port Hawkesbury
  - the renovation of the Riverview Residential Centre with the construction of a new 24-bed wing, as well as, the construction of three smaller community homes
  - a Regional Rehabilitation Centre at the former Cobequid site.

- The department is also funding programs to help recent public school graduates with special needs strengthen their employment opportunities, and academic and social skills. In Halifax, the department funded the *Access to Community Education and Employment Program*. In Port Hawkesbury, the department helped fund a one-year pilot project to

prepare Strait-area high school graduates with disabilities for full-time employment and independent living.

Funding Strategy

The department is developing a funding strategy for our Services for Persons with Disabilities service providers. The goal of this strategy is to ensure that our residential service providers have appropriate funding support based on the principles of fairness, involvement, consistency, accountability, and transparency. In 2007-2008, the department initiated:

- individual rate reviews for our service providers in all four regions. These reviews will continue until all per diem rates have been assessed and approved by the regional rate setting committees.

- a full review of funding policies for service providers. A new set of funding guidelines is being drafted to ensure that all funding decisions are consistent and transparent.

- the development of staffing guidelines to consistently assess the required level of staff for the provision of quality client care.

4.4.2 Other Accomplishments

The following initiatives are some additional accomplishments under Services for Persons with Disabilities that were not identified in the 2007-2008 Business Plan.

Support for Seniors Pilot Program

The Support for Seniors Pilot Program began in early July 2007. This program provides financial assistance to seniors who are living in their own home or the home of a relative or friend to help defray the extra costs associated with aging. This adheres to the wishes of most Nova Scotia seniors to remain in their homes, for as long as possible.

Better Regulation Initiative -*Homes for Special Care Regulations*

The amendment to repeal the Quarterly Report to the Chief Inspector in the *Homes for Special Care Regulations* was effective April 15, 2008. This amendment removes the requirement for service providers to submit duplicate information, ie. information already available to the department. The elimination of this administrative requirement does not lessen the protection of residents in licensed homes, but it does mean, that service providers will no longer have to submit unnecessary paperwork, saving them time and money.

4.5 Human Resource Strategy

The department is committed to creating a supportive work environment in which employees have opportunities to develop their full potential and to use their experience, knowledge, and skills in a way that allows them to make a positive contribution to the department's pursuit of excellence.

The Government of Nova Scotia Corporate Human Resource Plan establishes specific goals and objectives to guide the development of the public sector workforce. In 2007-2008, Community Services worked on the following priorities in its effort to advance the goals and objectives of this plan.

4.5.1 Phase II Succession Management

With an aging workforce, the department is placing an increasing emphasis on staff retention and recruitment strategies, career planning, training, and development planning. A Succession Management Plan has been developed to address the challenge of sustaining a knowledgeable and competent workforce.

In 2007-2008, Community Services launched Phase II Succession Management Program - a program designed to provide a structured effort to ensure continuity in key positions while retaining and developing staff. Key Phase II activities include the development of two workshops:

- The Career Development Workshop examines the career planning process and supports the mapping out of a realistic path to achieving career aspirations within the workforce.
- The Career Coaching Workshop reviews and discusses coaching methods suitable for Supervisors/Managers support of direct reports engaged in career development activities, career planning training for departmental line staff, and coaching and mentoring training for Community Services managers.

The workshops are scheduled for the summer and fall of 2008-2009.

4.5.2 Healthy Workplace Initiative

In 2007-2008, the department focused on generating awareness, improving the visibility of the Healthy Workplace Initiative, and making information more accessible to staff. To achieve these objectives the following strategies were implemented:

- An overview of the Healthy Workplace Initiative was communicated to staff.
- Many of Community Services' offices have created Healthy Workplace committees to enable staff at the local level to participate in the Healthy Workplace initiative.
- Healthy workplace bulletin boards have been installed in most offices to display health promotion and healthy lifestyle information.

- Learning opportunities were offered in offices throughout the province.
- The departmental newsletter, "Outlook", features a regular Healthy Workplace column.
- The department's intranet site features Healthy Workplace resource information for staff.
- *We Make a Difference* video, highlighting the great work of staff of the Department of Community Services, was developed and posted to the department's intranet site.

4.6 Corporate Support

The following accomplishments were achieved under the corporate support divisions of the department.

Social Prosperity Framework

In November 2007, Nova Scotia's new framework for social prosperity - *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Framework* - was announced. This framework outlines how social prosperity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability are linked. It is an important first step to integrate the idea of a broader social prosperity into all aspects of public policy and not silo it within a single department. Government departments working together with communities to develop and implement social policy is the principle behind the framework. It provides the foundation to base the province's future social programming.

New Initiatives Tracking System

A new automated, web-based Initiatives Tracking System was developed to capture, track and store information on the department's most significant initiatives in one central secured location. The new system improves information sharing and enhances reporting capabilities while eliminating reporting duplication. The Initiatives Tracking System will be rolled out to staff in June 2008 and be used to satisfy all the reporting requirements of the department.

5.0 FINANCIAL RESULTS

The department's budget estimate for the fiscal year 2007-2008 was $781.8 million. Favourable caseload trends in one of the four major program areas allowed for a significant increased investment in Housing Services, Family and Community Supports and Services for Persons with Disabilities while remaining within budget.

Department of Community Services
Estimated & Actual Expenditures
For the Year Ending March 31, 2008

Operational Area	Estimate 2007-2008 ($thousands)	Actual 2007-2008 ($thousands)	Variance	Notes
Senior Management	1,346	1,255	91	
Corporate Service Unit	16,107	14,735	1,372	
Policy and Information Management	3,618	3,242	376	
Housing Authority & Property Operations	6,895	5,805	1,090	
Field Offices	9,699	9,448	251	
Services for Persons with Disabilities	207,925	210,805	(2,880)	1
Family and Community Supports	166,117	170,323	(4,206)	2
Housing Services	28,374	35,442	(7,068)	3
Income Assistance & Employment Support	341,702	328,994	12,708	4
All Divisions (DCS)	781,783	780,049	1,734	
Salaries and Benefits	82,943	81,422	1,521	
Funded Staff (FTE's)	1,319	1,277	42	

Notes to the Estimated & Actual Expenditures For the Year Ending March 31, 2008

1. Over spent due to one time strategic funding initiatives which were approved in order to carry out various capital infrastructure improvements deemed necessary by order of the Fire Marshall.

2. Over spent due to the high costs associated with the placement of children with challenging behaviors in Places of Safety. The increased number of apprehensions and their associated legal costs as well as increased counselling and assessment services has also contributed to this variance.

3. Over spent due to decreased Government of Canada recoveries, increased costs in the Rural and Native program, increased costs in the Affordable Housing programs, and adjustments to the recoverable from the Deferred Federal Contribution account.

4. Under spent due to continuing caseload decline in Income Assistance somewhat attributable to the success

of our Employment Support Programs. This has also favourably impacted the associated Pharmacare Program. We continue to experience favourable caseload trends in the NS Child Benefit Program as well as a slower than anticipated uptake in the new Low Income Pharmacare Program for Children.

6.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This section provides detailed information on the outcomes and measures of each of the department's four core business areas and our effort to advance the goals and objectives of the Government Human Resource Plan.

Please note, that some measures have been replaced or refined in an effort to better reflect the desired outcomes of the department's services and programs. Changes are noted at the end of the document.

6.1 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE

The focus of Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) is to provide assistance for individuals and families in their efforts to become self-sufficient. Several interrelated performance measures are used to help track progress toward this outcome.

The measure - average monthly beneficiaries as a percentage of the NS population - is an indicator of self-sufficiency and discussed in part A below.

Three additional measures provide an overview of the success of Employment Support Services (ESS) in addressing the employment-related needs of clients - percentage of income assistance recipients participating in ESS; percentage of income assistance recipients participating in ESS with wage income; percentage of youth (16 - 24) in receipt of income assistance assisted to enhance their employability. These measures are discussed in part B.

A: SELF-SUFFICIENCY

6.6.1 AVERAGE MONTHLY BENEFICIARIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE NOVA SCOTIA POPULATION

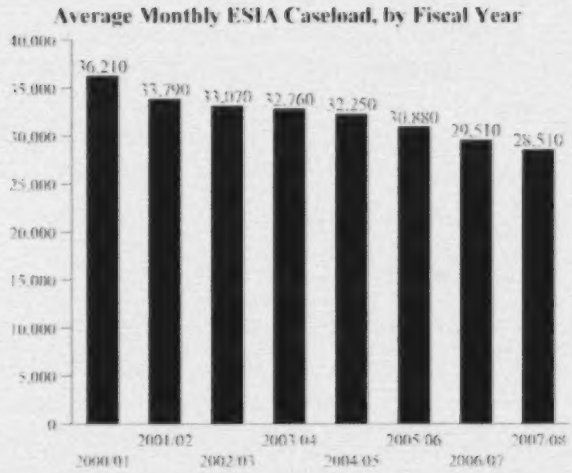
In the 2007-2008 Business Plan, the department introduced a new measure - the average number of people on the department's income assistance caseload each fiscal year as a percentage of Nova Scotia's population. This measure represents the percentage of low income Nova Scotia households dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs in the context of Nova Scotia's population.

What does this measure tell us?

A reduction in the number of persons dependent on income assistance is an indication of better outcomes for low income people. It represents the number of persons who have moved or are making the transition into the work force.

Where are we now?

The number of individuals receiving income assistance continues to decline. In 2007-2008, the average monthly caseload was 28,510. As depicted in the accompanying chart, the average monthly caseload has been trending steadily downward, falling from 36,210 cases in 2000-2001 to 28,510 in 2007-2008, a reduction of 21 percent.



In 2007-2008, 4.8 percent of Nova Scotia's population was dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs. This result surpassed the department's performance target of 5.3 percent.

Average Monthly Beneficiaries as a Percentage of the Nova Scotia Population		
2005-2006 (Base Year)	**2006-2007**	**2007-2008**
5.5%	5.1%	4.8%

Continued growth in the economy has contributed to the caseload reduction over the past several years. In addition, programs like the Transitional Pharmacare Program, the Nova Scotia Child Benefit Program, the Low Income Pharmacare Program for Children, together with continued investment in affordable accessible child care have enabled people to make a successful transition into the labour force.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The department is striving to decrease the number of low income households dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs. In 2008-2009, the department is implementing a number of changes and enhancements to Employment Support Services to ensure the department is effectively supporting clients/participants to become more self-sufficient. As well, Community Services is working with the new Department of Labour and Workforce Development in the development and implementation of a new integrated labor market model that fully integrates and optimizes federal and provincial investments to prepare Nova Scotians for work.

B: Addressing Employment Related Needs

6.6.2 Income Assistance Recipients Participating in Employment Support Services

Many income assistance recipients are involved in programs to enhance their skills and personal potential. Individuals may enroll in a variety of programs including literacy and upgrading programs, as well as, specialized courses assisting people to acquire job specific skills. Participation in training and employment activities gives people an opportunity to become more self-sufficient.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients participating in Employment Support Services. Participation in Employment Support Services helps individuals retain and build on the education and skills required to become, and remain, self-reliant. Education and job related skills are significant barriers to employment for our clients.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, 21.6[1] percent of income assistance recipients received services, at some point during the year, from Employment Support Services. All programs offered to clients within Employment Support Services are based upon a comprehensive assessment process. Each assessment informs an employment action plan that may use a variety of programs to assist with a transition to employment. Examples of programs provided through ESS include:

- One Journey Work and Learn Programs provides opportunities for skills development and direct employment by responding to industry skills shortages.
- Educate to Work Program supports individuals attending the Nova Scotia Community College.
- Targeted Wage Subsidy programs includes job development services and employment readiness programs.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The department will continue to focus on enhancing the skills and personal potential of income assistance recipients through the completion of accurate employability assessments and by referring clients to appropriate employment support programs. In 2008-2009, the department will strive to achieve an Employment Support Services participation rate of 23 percent.

---

[1]Following the implementation of Integrated Case Management (ICM), the Employment Support Services caseload is more accurately being tracked and calculated resulting in the need for a new base year and target.

6.6.3 Income Assistance Recipients Participating in Employment Support Services with Wage Income

Employment Support Services helps eligible people on income assistance to become more self-sufficient. Involvement in employment activities such as volunteer or part-time work or career planning not only reduces reliance on income assistance but also enables individuals and families to achieve a greater degree of self-reliance and independence.

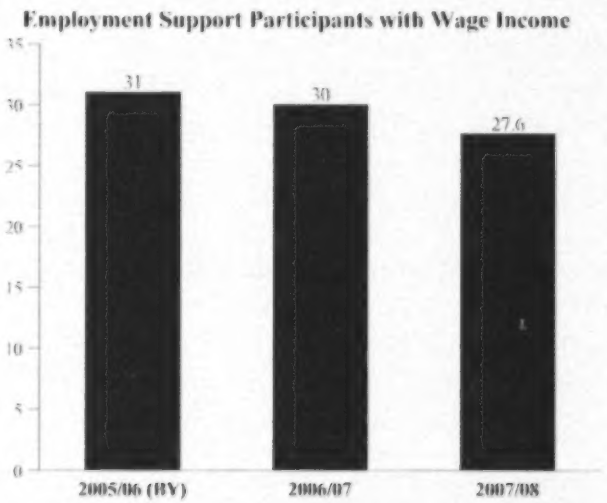
What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients participating in Employment Support Services who have wage income. Included in this calculation are individuals who are still receiving social assistance at a reduced amount because their wages earned are not sufficient to completely exit the program.

Where are we now?

The department offers a variety of programs, such as the Harvest Connection, Return to Work Projects, Targeted Wage Subsidy programs and Work Activity projects, with the goal of linking income assistance recipients to employment opportunities.

In 2007-2008, 27.6 percent of Employment Support Services clients had wage income. This result falls short of the 32 percent target and is down slightly from the 2005-2006 figure of 31 percent, but needs to be considered in the context that the Employment Support Services caseload is comprised of individuals that are displaying anywhere from 6 - 12 barriers to employment. These barriers may include literacy issues, changing family circumstances, disabilities and/or educational/training gaps. Overcoming such barriers requires additional time and support to help these individuals make the transition into the labour force.



Where do we want to be in the future?

The 2008-2009 target for recipients involved in Employment Support Services who have wage income is 32 percent. The department will continue to focus on reducing people's dependence on income assistance through labour market participation. In 2007-2008, the department plans to:

- review current wage incentive policies
- provide timely targeted support to specific groups to support their movement to the work

force

- create new or enhanced job development tools to better support groups, such as persons with disabilities
- work with the Department of Labour and Workforce Development to provide a coordinated approach to assisting recipients with employment initiatives.

6.6.4 Youth (16-24) Receiving Income Assistance Assisted to Enhance Employability

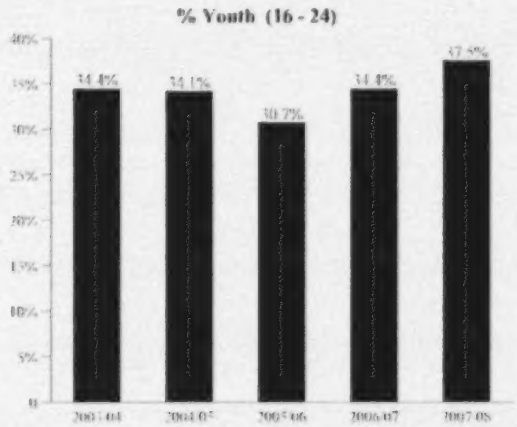
People who establish dependency patterns early in life often have greater difficulty establishing long-term self-sufficiency. The department is striving to ensure that youth in financial need have opportunities to transition to employment and self-reliance.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients, age 16 to 24, participating in Employment Support Services. Participation in Employment Support Services helps individuals retain and build on the education and skills required to become and remain self-reliant.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, there were approximately 4,750 income assistance recipients between the ages of 16 to 24. Of these 37.5 percent participated in Employment Support Services which surpasses the 2007-2008 target of 32.7 percent. As depicted in the accompanying chart, more youth participated in employment support programs this year compared to the previous four years.



Where do we want to be in the future?

The department would like to increase the percentage of youth participating in Employment Support Services. In consideration of this year's results, a new target will be established for 2008-2009.

6.2 Housing

The key outcome of Housing is to ensure that more households in Nova Scotia have access to safe, appropriate, affordable, and sustainable housing. The commitments made under three key sources of funding are used to track the department's progress towards this outcome.

6.2.1 Affordable Housing Agreement Funds Committed

Under Phase II of the Affordable Housing Agreement, the Province has approximately $18.9 million to invest in affordable housing by March 2009.

What does the measure tell us?

Providing affordable housing options to low and moderate income Nova Scotians is essential for their well-being and that of their families, and for the development of sustainable communities. This measure indicates how much of the Canada-Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement funds have been committed to creating or preserving affordable housing units in Nova Scotia.

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2008, approximately 50 percent of the Phase II funds were committed; representing approximately 180 units built or preserved. This exceeds the 2007-2008 target to commit 40 percent of the $18.9 million. The department is strategically investing the funding provided by our partner, the federal government, to ensure the best use of public funds in providing housing solutions to our clients.

Affordable Housing Agreement Funds Committed		
2006-2007 (Base Year)	**2007-2008**	**2008-2009 Target**
8.5%	50%	100%

Where do we want to be in the future?

Phase II funding, $18.9 million, will be fully committed by March 2009 and over 200 affordable housing units will be created or preserved through partnerships with community-based organizations, municipalities, and the private sector.

6.2.2 Federal Housing Trust Funds Committed

In September 2006, the federal government provided the Province with $23 million in funding through the Affordable Housing Trust to address short term housing pressures. Although the province is given flexibility in its use, the funds are not intended to replace other areas of provincial funding.

What does the measure tell us?

Providing housing options to low income Nova Scotians is essential for their well-being and that of their families, and for the development of sustainable communities. This measure indicates how much of the Federal Housing Trust funds have been committed to creating or

renovating housing units in Nova Scotia.

Where are we now?

By March 31, 2008, Community Services committed 29 percent of the $23 million. This exceeds the target set for 2007-2008 - to commit 25 percent of the funds. With these funds, the department invested in immediate short term public/social housing pressures such as the installation of elevators in 15 seniors apartment buildings and the construction or regeneration of 40 affordable housing units.

Federal Housing Trust Funds Committed		
2006-2007 (Base Year)	2007-2008	2008-2009 Target
11%	29%	100%

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2008-2009, the remaining portion of the Federal Affordable Housing Trust, $16.4 million, will be invested in the modernization and regeneration of the social housing portfolio, and the creation of new affordable housing units. This includes new rental construction for persons in need, as well as, aging in place initiatives for public and non-profit housing.

6.2.3 Off- Reserve Aboriginal Trust Funds Committed

In September 2006, the federal government provided the Province with $7.8 million in funding through the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust. The Trust is intended to address short-term housing needs of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Community.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure indicates how much of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Trust funds have been committed to creating or renovating housing units in the Off Reserve Aboriginal Community.

Where are we now?

In 2006-2007, Community Services commenced consultations with Aboriginal organizations and the Provincial Office of Aboriginal Affairs to develop a collaborative strategy that identifies housing priorities and a delivery framework.

In 2007-2008, implementation of the strategy began with $1.1 million in affordable housing options delivered by the Off Reserve Community. This represents 14 percent of the $7.8 million Trust which is below the 20 percent target set for 2007-2008. During the early stages of construction the focus is on development agreements, design, environmental assessment, and financing arrangements. The bulk of funding is spent in the latter stage on construction which is

scheduled for 2008-2009.

Off-Reserve Aboriginal Trust Funds Committed		
2006-2007 (Base Year)	2007-2008	2008-2009 Target
0%	14%	86%

Where do we want to be in the future?

The remaining funds, $6.7 million, will be delivered in 2008-2009. The funds will be invested in housing repairs, new home ownership, rental preservation, and support services to the Off-Reserve Community.

6.3 Services and Supports for Families and Communities

Services and Supports for Families and Communities focuses on the provision of safe and nurturing environments for children to enable them to develop to their full potential. The presence and opportunity for appropriate experiences in the early years in the home, the care environment, and the neighbourhood can promote optimum development in all areas - learning, language, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical. A broad range of community-based, prevention-oriented supports for both children and families are available.

6.3.1 Number of Children in Care Placed for Adoption

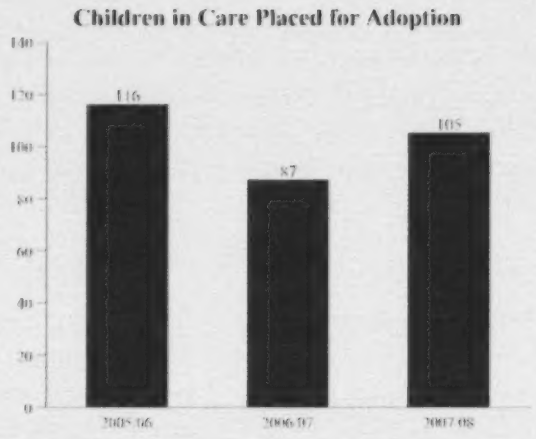
The Department of Community Services is responsible for Nova Scotian children when they cannot be safely and securely cared for by their own families. Where a child is in the department's permanent care and custody and legally free for adoption, it is in the child's best interest to be placed for adoption as quickly as possible. Research has shown that a secure stable family environment is an important factor in healthy child development.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure reports on the number of children in the department's care that are placed for agency adoption. The number includes adoptions that have not yet been finalized.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, 105 children were placed for adoption. The target was to place 128 children for adoption. Though, the full target was not met, the number of placements increased substantially (20.6 percent) over the previous year results of 87 adoptions.



In November 2007, during Adoption Awareness Month, the department ran an adoption awareness and recruitment campaign called *Kids Can't Wait to Have a Family*. The campaign involved print and television advertising and a variety of promotional materials aimed at encouraging more Nova Scotians to explore adoption.

Where do we want to be in the future?

There are more than 100 children and youth in Nova Scotia who are waiting to be adopted into a loving family. The majority of children waiting to be adopted are older with special placement needs. In 2008-2009, the department is developing and launching a targeted recruitment plan for adoptive families who are able to accept school-aged children, sibling groups and children of African Nova Scotian heritage in an effort to maintain or increase the current rate of adoption.

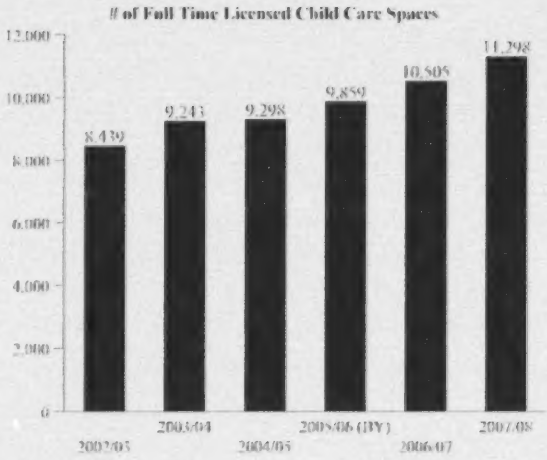
6.3.2 Number of Spaces in Full-Time Licensed Care Centres

Access to child care is a necessary resource for parents of young children, who are either employed, seeking employment, or pursuing training.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of spaces in full-time licensed child care centres is a measure of the department's ability to meet the early childhood development needs of children. Quality child care offers an ongoing opportunity for children's learning while providing safe and reliable care that promotes socialization, health, and a child's well-being. The availability of child care is also an important resource for parents to enter and remain in the labour force, or to access employment training.

Where are we now?



In April 2008, there were 11,298 spaces in full-time licensed child care centres. This represents a 15 percent increase compared to the base year and surpasses the target of 10,110 licensed child care spaces by April 2008. Part of this increase is the result of the department's Expansion Loan Program which provided financial assistance to 16 applicants, for a total of $4.1 million, to enable them to expand their capacity.

As depicted in the accompanying chart, the number of spaces in full-time licensed child care centres has been trending steadily upward, a 34 percent increase in the number of spaces over the past five years. This translates to 2,859 more spaces compared to six years ago.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Through Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Child Care Plan, the department will continue to invest funding in the expansion of licensed child care spaces, as well as, family-home child care spaces. Considering the department is much further ahead in the number of full-time licensed child care spaces than originally projected, new targets will be developed for April 2009.

6.3.3 Number of Subsidized Child Care Spaces

Access to affordable licensed child care offers an ongoing opportunity for children's learning while providing safe and reliable care that promotes socialization, health, and a child's well-being. Availability of affordable child care is a critical resource to low income families who wish to remain in the labour force, seek employment, or access training.

What does this measure tell us?

There are two types of subsidized spaces; fixed spaces allocated to full day non-profit licensed centres and portable spaces that belong to a child and are not fixed to a child care centre. The number of subsidized child care spaces includes both types and is a measure of the department's ability to support low income families with their child care needs.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, there were 3,154 subsidized child care spaces. This represents a 4 percent increase compared to the base year results and slightly exceeds the 2007-2008 target of 3,130 spaces.

Number of Subsidized Child Care Spaces		
2005-2006	2006-2007 (Base Year)	2007-2008
3,030	3,030	3,154

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2008-2009, the department is providing funding for another 250 subsidized child care spaces.

6.3.4 Monthly Utilization Rate of Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces

The availability of affordable child care is a critical resource to low income families. By making child care more affordable and accessible, the department is making it easier for parents to work.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure represents the average monthly utilization of portable subsidized child care spaces.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, the average monthly utilization of portable subsidized child care spaces dipped slightly as a result of converting approximately 140 unused fixed subsidized spaces to portable subsidized spaces. The new total of portable subsidized spaces is now more than 1,200. The conversion of unused fixed to portable means a significant number of more families are able to access a child care subsidy and allows them to choose child care that best suits their individual circumstances.

Utilization Rate of Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces		
2005-2006 (Base Year)	2006-2007	2007-2008
90.84%	93.71%	89.01%

Where do we want to be in the future?

Effective April 1, 2008, new income eligibility rules were introduced that are expected to result in an increase in utilization of portable spaces.

- Families with up to two children and a net income of about $62,000 may be eligible, up from $55,000. Subsidies are given in proportion to net income.

- The minimum child care fee for a parent receiving a subsidy is being lowered to $1 per day, per child, from $2.25.

These enhancements will help families access portable subsidy spaces, therefore, the target for 2008-2009 is a 95 percent utilization rate.

6.3.5 Number Family Home Day Care Spaces

This year, under the Early Learning and Child Care Plan, the department launched a family home day care program to improve the availability of quality child care throughout the province. Family home day care provides another child care option to Nova Scotia families, particularly in rural areas of the province.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of spaces in family home day cares is another measure of the department's ability to meet the early childhood development needs of children.

Where are we now?

In 2006-2007, through the family home day care pilot program, there were 150 family home day care spaces in the province. The following year, the department launched a new family home day care program to increase the number of quality day care spaces in the province, in particular, rural Nova Scotia. Under this new program, the number of family home day care spaces increased by 16 percent to 174 spaces.

Number of Family Home Day Care Spaces	
2006-2007 (Base Year)	2007-2008
150 spaces	174 spaces

Where do we want to be in the future?

The 2008-2009 target is to have 450 family home day care spaces throughout the province. To accomplish this goal, the department is providing funding for another 10 new family home agencies.

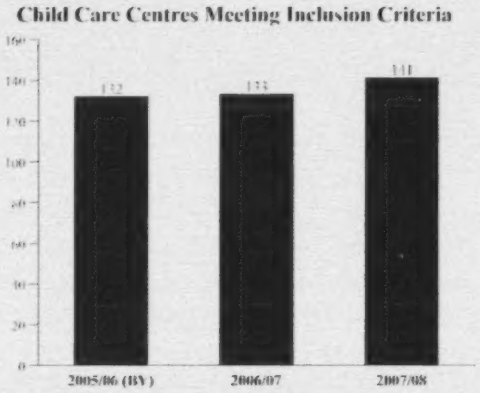
6.3.6 Number of Child Care Centres Meeting Inclusion Criteria

Funding is provided to licensed child care centres to support the development of skills and competencies of young children with special needs. The term "child with special needs" can refer to a child with an identified or diagnosed delay in development by six months or more, in two or more areas of development, and/or children who are "at risk" for developmental delay.

What does this measure tell us?

Early intervention and support, within the context of licensed child care, is an enabler in assisting children with special needs to achieve their full potential. Number of licensed child care centres meeting inclusion criteria is a measure of the capacity building effort within the child care sector to provide inclusive programs.

Where are we now?



The department provides funding to licensed child care centres to support the development of skills and competencies of young children with special needs. This funding is used to build program capacity to include children with special needs. In 2007-2008, the department applied standardized criteria to assess the capacity of licensed child care centres to include children with special needs in their program. One hundred and forty-one licensed child care centres were providing some level of inclusive programming. This represents a 6.8 percent increase compared to the previous year and indicates an increase in effort by the child care sector to provide support to children with special needs. This result falls slightly short of the target of 145 licensed child care centres meeting inclusion criteria.

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2008-2009, the department would like to increase the number of licensed child care centres meeting inclusion criteria. To achieve this target, the department will provide an increase in funding of $900,000 to support the continued effort of centres to meet eligibility requirements regarding the provision of inclusive child care.

6.4 Services for Persons with Disabilities

Access to a range of residential supports is key to positive outcomes for clients of the Services for Persons with Disabilities Program. The needs of children and adults with disabilities vary; likewise the services needed to support people with disabilities to be independent, safe, and healthy in their communities ranges from minimal to intensive. Across the province, the SPD program provides residential and/or vocational programs for approximately 4,500 clients.

Over the course of the past year, the department has undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance the range of residential supports and to make these supports more accessible. The desired outcome is to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to live healthy, safe, and independent lives.

With additional investment by government, the department has made progressive strides in providing a more responsive, accessible, and sustainable system of supports for Nova Scotians with disabilities.

6.4.1 Number of Adult Clients with Disabilities Receiving Support Services who Remain at Home with their Families

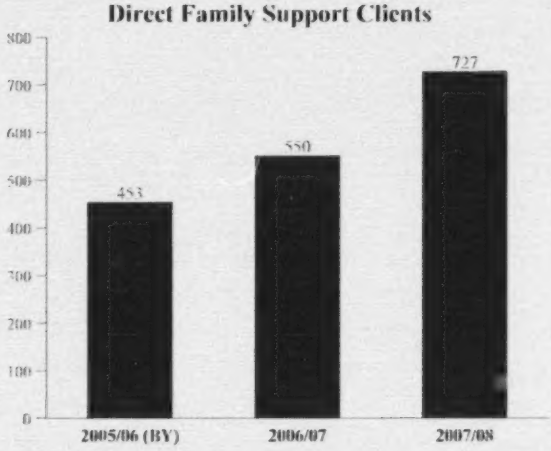
The funding offered through the Direct Family Support program enables families to support family members with a disability at home, preventing the need for an out-of-home placement.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure, the number of adult clients receiving direct family support funding, demonstrates progress towards improving the continuum of residential support options available to adults with disabilities.

Where are we now?

Since the implementation of the Direct Family Support program, there has been a steady growth in the number of clients. In 2007-2008, there were 727 clients,19 years of age and older, throughout the province. This represents a 60 percent increase compared to base year results of 453 clients and exceeds the department's target of 600 clients.



In 2007-2008, the department promoted the Direct Family Support program in communities throughout Nova Scotia as the preferred program option.

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2008-2009, the department will focus on the continued expansion and improvement of the Direct Family Support program. Continued growth in this program means individuals are remaining at home and benefitting from all aspects of community living as opposed to living in a residential setting. It also takes pressure off the residential Services for Persons with Disabilities programs.

6.4.2 Number of Clients Placed in Alternative Family Support Homes

In April 2006, the department implemented the Alternative Family Support program. This program supports families who welcome a person with a disability into their homes. The program enables individuals to remain closer to their communities and live in a family like

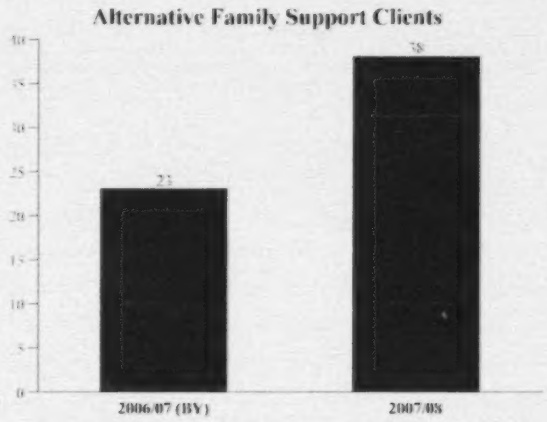
setting.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of clients in Alternative Family Support homes demonstrates progress towards improving the continuum of residential support options available to adults with disabilities.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, the department met its target of 38 Alternative Family Support clients. This represents a 65 percent increase since the rollout of the program in 2006-2007. To achieve this result, the department developed and implemented communication and recruitment strategies to increase community awareness and understanding of the program.



Where do we want to be in the future?

Over the next few years, the department would like to have steady growth in the number of clients accessing the Alternative Family Support program. The 2008-2009 target is 48 clients.

6.4.3 Number of Independent Support Clients

The Independent Living Support program provides a minimal level of support, up to 21 hours a week, to adults with disabilities. Individuals are able to achieve and maintain the highest level of independence possible by enabling them to live independently in their communities and by promoting community participation.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of Independent Living support clients is another measure of the department's ability to provide a continuum of residential support options for adults with disabilities.

Where are we now?

Implementation of the Independent Living Support program began in January 2006 and included Eastern and Northern regions only. In 2007-2008, there were 40 independent living support clients. This result is below the set target of 90 clients but does represent a 60 percent increase compared to the previous year results of 25 clients. Rollout of the Independent Living

Support program province-wide did not occur until March 31, 2008; later than anticipated.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Independent Living Support program will be available province-wide starting April 1, 2008. For the first time, adults with disabilities across the province will be able to get the required support they need to live independently within their communities. The 2008-2009 target is to increase the number of Independent Living Support clients to 95.

6.4.5 Number of Clients Served by Adult Service Centres

Adult Service Centres provide employment, skills training and day program opportunities for adults with disabilities in communities across Nova Scotia. Currently, there are 30 Adult Service Centres across the province.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of clients served by adult service centres - is a measure of the department's ability to provide access to programs that enhance the quality of life and employability of adults with disabilities.

Where are we now?

For the second consecutive year, approximately 1,770 persons with disabilities were provided services and support through adult service centres which fall short of the target of 1,870. In 2007-2008, the department made strategic investment to address some gaps in the continuum of vocational and day programs offered. The results of these investments will not be realized until 2008-2009.

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2008-2009, the department is investing an additional $2.8 million to increase the capacity of adult service centres. This investment will be guided by the implementation of the Services for Persons with Disabilities Provincial Strategy which is designed to address day program and residential services for persons with disabilities well into the future.

6.5 Human Resources

The following three measures are used to track the department's ability to create a supportive work environment in which employees have opportunities to develop to their full potential

6.5.1 Employees who Indicate they have Access to Training Opportunities

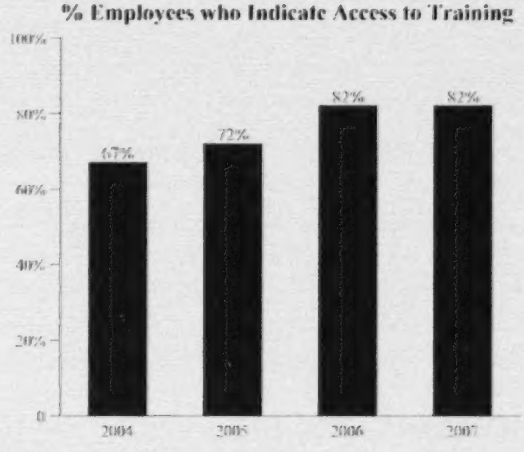
The continuous growth and development of Community Services' staff is required to ensure the department achieves organizational success now and in the future.

What does this measure tell us?

In the annual employee survey, respondents are asked if they have access to training opportunities. The number of "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree" responses are combined to determine the percentage of Community Services' employees who indicate they have access to training opportunities.

Where are we now?

Results of the 2007 survey, indicate that 82 percent of Community Services staff who responded to the survey have access to training opportunities. As depicted in the accompanying chart, this result is consistent with the previous year and surpasses our target of 75 percent. To help achieve this result the department established regional and provincial training committees, developed a departmental training calender, and ensured all employees have access to LearnNet - a management system for employees to browse training catalogues and to register for courses online.



Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2008-2009, the department is striving to achieve a target of 100% and to maintain this target in future years. Under the succession management initiative, the department will be placing an increasing emphasis on staff retention and recruitment strategies, career planning, training, and development planning. In 2008-2009, the Career Planning Program will be rolled out to all bargaining unit employees.

6.5.3 Percentage of Management who Participate in Annual Performance Reviews

Performance management is a strategic leadership tool for organizational effectiveness. It helps ensure that efforts are focused on the goals and priorities of the department. Performance management is also a tool for developing competent leadership now and in the future.

What does this measure tell us?

The success of employees depends on a clear performance management process, which recognizes the accomplishments and supports the professional development of public service employees. There are two distinct, but similar, performance management processes: one for management employees and one for bargaining unit employees. This measure includes the percentage of management staff who participate in annual performance reviews.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, 80 percent of management staff completed an annual performance review. This is nine percentage points higher than the previous year of 71 percent but 20 percentage points lower than the target. The department is striving to achieve a participation rate of 100% by making annual performance reviews for management employees a mandatory practice.

Percentage of Management who Participate in Annual performance Reviews		
2005-2006 (Base Year)	2006-2007	2007-2008
85%	71%	80%

Where do we want to be in the future?

To help achieve a participation rate of 100%, all managers will receive performance management training and performance reviews for management employees will continue to be a mandatory requirement.

6.54 Number of Diversity Training Participants

Diversity training is a mandatory course for all employees. This training is provided through the Public Service Commission and is designed to help participants understand typical patterns of behaviour when some people in a workplace are different from the majority. It introduces the language and concepts of diversity, along with strategies for equity and inclusion.

What does this measure tell us?

The department recognized that diversity competencies are an essential requirement of

the future. The "one-size fits all model" is no longer reasonable in a dynamic and increasingly diverse labour market. The department encourages all new employees to participate in diversity training within the first year of employment.

Where are we now?

In 2007-2008, 35 percent of new employees participated in diversity training within their first year of employment. This represents a 40 percent increase compared to the previous year's result of 25 percent. The 2007-2008 target was 60 percent. Achieving this result is contingent upon the Public Service Commission who provides the course.

Where do we want to be in the future?

All new Community Services' employees will be extended diversity training when it is offered by the Public Service Commission. The department will strive for a higher participation rate. The 2008-2009 target is 70 percent.

Changes to Performance Measures

1. The number of Career Seek participants is one of several Employment Support Services programs that is tracked under the performance measure - percentage of income assistance recipients participating in employment support services. To avoid duplication, the measure - number of Career Seek participants has been removed from the department's Business Plan and Accountability Report.